1:Marshall E-5 (1952-1953) 1959 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

584 Boys are always considerably older than girls before their parents betroth them.
[805] We never knew the precise age of a /Kung because they reckon time from one season to the next, not in years, and do not keep track of a person's age by any measurement. Boys appear to be usually around twelve to fourteen or fifteen before they are
[868] betrothed. At this age their fathers begin to take them on the long hard hunts for the
[883] big animals which supply the people's meat and begin their serious hunting training.

As to girls, wives are in such demand in this polygynous society that the parents of boys have their eyes upon every girl baby and may say to the parents of an unborn infant, 'If it is a girl, let us have her for our son.' It seems to be more usual, however, to betroth the girls when they are about two to five or six. The boys wait patiently for long years for their fiancées to grow up.

We wondered what would happen if, when the time at last came for the marriage, the boy or girl should refuse the parents' choice. It appears that they seldom do. A boy is usually too eager to get a wife. To refuse the betrothed might mean he would have to wait for years and years again for a girl baby to grow up. The girls are usually too young to protest but it sometimes happens that one does. /Kung
593 parents are exceedingly protective and permissive with their children, and delight
855 in them, especially in their infancy. I have sometimes seen an older child scolded or
861 snapped at by an impatient mother but I never saw a child severely punished. No hard work and few, if any, regular chores are demanded of dependent children. The same protectiveness and permissiveness were apparent in parents' lenience with respect to their girls' betrothals. They complied with the girls' wishes.

The marriage may take place when the parents agree. The age of the young people
582 varies greatly. For the girl, there are no definite age or other requirements. The girl need not, for instance, show physical signs of maturity. When the important Ceremony of First Menstruation is performed, the girl may have been married for years. Bau, who was married to Tsamgao in 1951, did not have her first child for six years. /Nai was married to /Gunda in May 1953. She menstruated for the first time in March 1959. To be married as young as that is not at all unusual, but we have known several girls to be somewhat older.

The parents explain that when the girls marry young they 'get used to' their
582 husbands. I am sure there is a great deal in this and I am sure it strongly affects the
593 relations of husbands and wives, but I had insufficient opportunity to observe eight- or nine-year-old brides with teen-age husbands, and insufficient means, through interpreters, to grasp the nature of their relationship. What is the young husband like to a girl child? The friendly, gentle old man, Demi, said to me, 'They enjoy their youth together.'

The young couples are expected not to have sexual intercourse till the girls are 'big
593 enough', informants said, and the boys must not force the girls. If a girl complained
834 to her parents and the parents took her back and sent the young husband away, he might have to wait for years again for another bride to grow up. The /Kung are
[123] prevented by their incest taboos and their modesty from speaking freely about sex and I learned nothing about the actual sexual practices of the young couples. /Nai and her young husband, /Gunda, had only one good kaross between them; they slept
513 together bundled in it, feet to feet. Bau and Tsamgao slept quite apart—at different
593 fires—when we observed them in 1952. In 1953 they slept at their own fire, apart, she

[29 cont.]

847 child live, the older child would have to die. We are left with the choice of killing one of the children so that one can stay alive.' The explanation is absolutely convincing. There is the [593] added consideration that the Bushman mothers lose their maternal instincts when they see that a child is not thriving. I saw a six-month-old Bushman child, a really pitiful figure. The mother did not have sufficient food for her child. My wife offered to give the child the bottle. The proposal was joyfully accepted. For a few days, the child was brought at the specified times. It gladly took the bottle. But then the mother felt that her freedom was restricted. After all, she had to remain in the vicinity of the house for the sake of the child. She did not lack food at all. I provided for her. The desire for veldkost was too great, however, and the child was brought only in the morning and evening and received his meal. Naturally, no noticeable improvement could be observed. Hence, at an opportune occasion the mother disappeared, and when she reappeared, she was without the child. She and her friends had buried it alive."

853 Matters are certainly not always as hopeless as Vedder describes them. First of all, at a very early age the children are given pre-chewed veldkost, and, secondly, the women of the kin group help one another out with the breast feeding. During 854 the day the infant stays in a hide sack on the mother's back, and at night the children sleep at the mother's breast; the smallest lies directly at the breast, while during the cold season the others 867 cuddle around the mother's legs. From earliest childhood, the children are taught to honor the old people and not to take anything away from anyone. For the boys, the father soon carves a bow and arrow, for the girls a little digging stick. Nothing is said to little children when they take things, but once the boy has been given a bow, he may not touch anyone else's bow and arrow; otherwise he gets a beating. The boys greatly fear the women. 868 The bigger boys stay together by themselves and go hunting for 857 small game or accompany adults on the hunt for large game.

586 Marriage is absolutely indissoluble. Separation is also impossible, for outside the kin group the woman would perish in the wilderness. So far as I have observed, the relationship between 593 marriage partners is in general very good, and not uncommonly the

8: Fourie D-5 (ca. 1920) 1928
FX10 Bushmen FX10

sticks, pipes, etc., and occasionally assist the women in fetching wood and water. The women build the huts, collect veldkos and prepare the food, make the fire and keep it going, gather wood, fetch water and manufacture ostrich eggshell beads for ornaments, etc. The latter are also responsible for keeping the camp clean. 462

Infants and young children accompany their mothers on their daily excursions in search of food until they are old enough to look after themselves. From that time onwards the mothers take practically no share in their education which, in the case of girls, is entrusted entirely to an old woman who lives in the hut with the young girls, and in the case of boys, to their fathers. 857 855 871

Little girls, while still with their mothers, are taught to love and respect the old woman and to seek her company of their own accord. After taking up residence with her they accompany her daily into the veld and thus gradually come to learn from her all the duties which will ultimately devolve upon them. Boys sleep under the tree in the centre of the camp at night or in a hut specially set apart for them. Each morning they accompany their fathers into the veld. At first they are given little bows and wooden arrows with which to amuse themselves. Towards the eighth or ninth year each is provided by his father with a proper bow and three arrows which, however, are not poisoned. With these he is allowed to shoot hares, guinea fowl and other birds, wild cats, small buck, etc. After killing his first steenbuck or duiker he is given a few poisoned arrows and later, when he has become proficient in the use of these, he is taught to stalk and shoot big game. By the time he reaches the age of puberty he has, as a rule, gained a very good knowledge of veld craft. 868 857

Initiation Ceremonies.

Both boys and girls, on reaching a marriageable age, are subjected to certain ceremonies before being admitted to full membership of the group. These ceremonies vary considerably among the various tribes. 881 [884]

The following is an account of the girls' initiation ceremony as practised among the *Hei-||om* group around the Etosha Pan. As young girls (*ǂkham-khoidi*) approach the age of puberty they are placed in a hut called *ǂkham-khoidi* or *oaxai-khoidi oms* in which they sleep at night. During the daytime they gather veldkos either by themselves or in company with the married women. Men, whether married or single, may not enter the *ǂkham-khoidi oms* nor may they speak to the *ǂkham-khoidi*. The latter may, however, speak and be spoken to by the *axarogu*, but only at a distance so that no conversation of an intimate nature is possible without being overheard by the grown-up people. A man may on occasion address a *ǂkham-khois* by saying, "you must grow up so that I may marry you," but she will not reply. When addressed by a man, say, in the veld, she runs away to her

881 companions saying, "I dare not speak to you." The married
867 women visit the *ǂkham-khoidi oms* and instruct the inmates
868 in various domestic matters, *e.g.*, the way to clean and tidy their huts, to remain quiet when their husbands are cross, to prepare their husbands' food separately from their own, to pick up and beat the kudu skin on returning home in the evening so that the husband does not sleep on the previous day's dirt, etc. They further teach them to gather wood, to make the fire, to take away the ashes and so forth. At the onset of the first menstruation the girl tells her mother or, in case she has no mother, her best friend (*/hosas*), who then reports to one of the married women, not necessarily to the *gei-khois*. She is then isolated in a small round hut which is
[343] completely closed in except for a small entrance. It is known as the */hawa-omi* (hut for waiting) and is situated close to the *ǂkham-khoidi oms*. She is required to remain inside the */hawa-omi* and dare not show herself outside. No fire is made in the hut. She is fed by her mother or, in the absence of the latter, by another married woman. She is not visited by anybody except the person who feeds her. No medicine is given to her. Daily applications of */gub*, a red powder obtained by pulverising the bark of a tree, and of the roasted and powdered fat-containing seed of the *ǂerob* tree are made to her hair by the attendant. She may be given veldkos, but
[262] is not allowed to partake of meat. No man, not even the girl's father, may pass close to the */hawa-omi* or attempt to speak to her. She remains in the */hawa-omi* as long as the flow lasts. When it has ceased she informs her mother or the woman who has been attending her. The latter tells the
535 other married women and they all prepare to dance the
881 */hawa-ǂnab* (menstruation dance). This dance takes place during the day and men may not take part in it. They may, however, remain in the *//gãus* while it is going on or enter it when returning from the veld. The *ǂkham-khoidi* are also excluded from it. The */hawa-ǂnab* may be continued for three or four days. When the dance is about to begin an old woman, generally the *gei-khois*, holding a jackal tail duster, takes up a position some distance in front of the */hawa-omi*, and, dancing in one spot as if marking time, shouts *Ki-ri-ri-ri-ri-ri* to waken the initiate and to summon the other women. The latter then emerge from their huts and, dancing as they come along, take up position behind the */hawa-omi*. Two of them dance forward, passing one on each side of the little hut, towards its entrance and, as they reach the latter, the initiate comes out and the old woman stops shouting. After covering her whole head and face with a duiker skin kaross (*/gan-tab*), leaving only the eyes visible, each of the women takes an arm and, the other women coming into line from behind the hut, all dance towards the old woman who leads the way to the */huru-ǂgab*. Here they dance, the feet being thrown out sideways, always abreast of each other, with the old woman leading. Men are not permitted to watch the
881 dance. When the dance is about to end they return her to

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10

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Crooked Kwi and his wife, who once had run away from him.

Dikai made a bow from a branch, an arrow from a reed, and gave them to her younger son.

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[p. 176(C)]

10: Bleek E-5 (no date) 1924
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Naron

Brother and sister are the only relations who are forbidden to marry, and by this, real brother and sister are meant, the children of one father and mother, not cousins. I never heard a title for any cousin, however related, though several were present Cousins sometimes marry, but more often a bride from a distance is procured. 582

A pair of sisters have a very close relationship. They are generally chums, and help each other with their babies. A child calls its mother's sister its "little mother". In speaking of the occasional bigamy found among the **Naron** in contrast to other Bushman tribes, an old man said to me: 593 [601] [604] 595

"A man may take a second wife, if he wishes. If they agree well, they live in one hut; if not, each makes herself a hut. A man had better take his wife's younger sister as his second wife; then they do not quarrel, but live in one hut."

ǂka in **ǂkasha** "maternal aunt" may be derived from **ǂkai** "together". **Ho** used as a verb means "to marry", also "to give birth to children". **Ti kweba** and **ti kwesa** mean simply "my man", "my woman"; they are more often used than **hoba** and **hosha**. 196 601

A widow may marry her late husband's brother, but need not do so. She is quite at liberty to marry any other man. If she remarries, her husband is expected to look after her children; otherwise the duty falls upon their father's brother. The widow may stay near her husband's people, or return to her own people, as she pleases. 587 [604]

Grandparents, particularly on the mother's side, are very fond of adopting a grandchild. They will half adopt one, even during both parents' lifetime. The grandmother is generally the person who teaches a child to speak. 597 603 [868]

In concluding these notes on the tables of relationship, I should like to say that I know they are very incomplete. At the time of my stay among the **ǂkau ǂen** and **Naron** I had not realized the importance of this side of native life; nor apparently had my aunt, Dr. Lloyd, whose work I rely on for the **ǂzam** and **ǂkun** tables. Still, I think sufficient has been collected to show the general trend of Bushman family ties. 114

One must always remember, that people depending on nature for their entire food supply, can only exist in very small, widely scattered groups. Families cannot be large. Drought and famine 105 161

[Text continues on page 70]

222 461 on the season. In the long days of wilting between the October spring and the January summer, food is scarce and the women may go out every day into the failing veld, leaving their *werft* early in the morning and returning late in the afternoon. All 222 422 593 that a woman gathers belongs to her alone, and of course is shared with her family. She feeds her husband, her children and often a visitor or two, at her own hearth. No formal instruction 222 868 857 is practiced among the !Kung, with the possible exception of certain kinds of religious teaching and what might be called an occasional hunting school. Learning to gather comes from the children's observation of the more experienced women. Girls soon learn to [824] recognize more than a hundred kinds of edible plants that grow in *Nyae Nyae*, as well as the seasons and places in which these plants grow. They learn to see tiny, shriveled root vines coiled around thorns in the thickets and, in the process, develop fine powers of observation. Possibly complementary to this lack of formal instruction, no formal pressure is exerted on young people to take up adult roles. Girls, if they wish, accompany their mothers on gathering trips. If they do not, they rarely feel guilty. A girl usually be- [582] gins to feel responsible soon after she marries, which is often before puberty. But only when she has children of her own does a woman see the world through the eyes of a provider.

11: Marshall E-5 (1950-1955) 1958 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

HUNTSMEN OF NYAE NYAE

The !Kung still practice man's oldest craft

By JOHN MARSHALL

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HUNTING is the work of men. !Kung hunters range the land, seeking the agile game. The men walk rapidly, never lowering their eyes, making sure of the awkward ground with their dextrous feet. They glance swiftly over the distances of the country and, with their good vision and knowledge of what to look for, see any moving thing. As girls learn gathering, boys learn most of hunting on their own. They hunt little birds in the grass around the *werft* houses. They impale beetles with tiny arrows shot from toy bows. Tracking, which is the most difficult part

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CHIEF WEAPONS OF !Kung are bow and poisoned arrows (in quiver, above).

[p. 45]

224 of hunting, is learned last of all. Hunters must be able to recognize
868 the spoor of one wounded wildebeest out of a herd of fifty, and follow that track across desert ground which is almost as hard as stone.

224 The usual techniques of hunting are well adapted to the Kalahari terrain and, except on rare occasions, do not change—no matter what the animal may be. The !Kung hunt an eland and a duiker in the same manner; the idea is to get to the animal just as quickly as possible. The hunters feel that the longer they creep and wait, the more time the

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HUNTER'S TRAINING starts as childhood play, above, and !Kung youths will use anthills as targets and even stalk beetles as a game. Although their arrows are featherless,

[p.65]

513 882 together may sleep near the parents of one of them, but not exactly at the parents' fire.

855 857 Within the frame of protectiveness the parents are very permissive and make few, if any, demands on their children. With no houses and few utensils, there are not many household tasks to assign. Children are not sent off alone to do any of the daily work of fetching water or wood or [136] gathering veldkos. Although lions, leopards, and hyenas tend to mind their own business, they are present in the country and share the water holes with the Bushmen. Poisonous snakes are a very real danger. Furthermore, as the hunters say, it takes a lifetime to learn the country well enough not to be easily lost in the featureless grass and brush. The adults do not let their children out of their sight. In their parents' presence the children imitate adult activities in vital, active play, very engaging to watch, and [868] participate in actual work as they are able. The adults pause to show them how to hold a digging stick, or a toy bow or drill, so that play and learning merge.

524 857 [512] The !Kung have a rich variety of lively group games, with pantomime, singing, dancing, and other rhythmic movements, that children and adults together enjoy playing in the werf when the heat of the day is over. In most of their games boys and girls play separately, but they dance and sing together.

861 !Kung children are never harshly punished. One father said that if he had a boy who was quarrelsome or who disobeyed the rules—for instance, the absolute rule of the !Kung against stealing food or possessions—what he would do about it would be to keep the boy right with him until he learned 857 156 sense. The children on their part do not often do things that call forth punishment. They usually fall in with group life and do what is expected of them without apparent uncertainty, frustration, or fear; and expressions of resistance or hostility toward their parents, the group, or each other are very much the exception.

881 [173] [171] [562] [535] [534] [302] [304] PUBERTY • When the fathers of the present old men were young men, the Nyae Nyae !Kung adopted the ceremony of the *Choma*, which they said was taught to them by a !Kung man who had married into another language group in the south. The *Choma* resembles some Bantu initiation ceremonies at certain points. The men who have had the ceremony and are therefore *Choma* owners take the boys to a place far enough from the werf to be out of hearing of the women, who, the !Kung claim, would die if they heard some of the *Choma* sounds. The men and boys dance all night for several nights to special *Choma* songs with special rhythms that differ from those of the other dances. A secret bull-roarer plays a part in the ceremony. At the end the boys are scarified with a vertical line down the middle of their foreheads and are given a special *Choma* haircut. Circumcision or other genital operations are not practiced by the !Kung.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

middle-aged women who counted up to five children they had reared—the others were never mentioned. The eldest children were already married, the others quite small. 162

Childhood and Family Life

All Bushmen are very fond of their children, who receive love and care without stint.[1] Babies and young children are spoiled, and rarely corrected. The children begin to walk early, but long after a child can toddle it must still ride in its mother's kaross on food-gathering expeditions, giving her an additional burden to carry wherever she goes. When finally old enough to look after themselves, the youngsters go out with other children, trailing after the women or bigger girls. They have no special playthings; infants amuse themselves with sticks and stones and grasshoppers, playing about in the sand, while the young boys soon make themselves or are given little bows and wooden arrows, with which they shoot small birds and reptiles. 855 857 [524]

Both boys and girls go out with their elders on the daily excursions in search of food, even the babies go, riding in their mothers' karosses. The day is spent out in the open veld, and here the children receive most of their education. The girls accompany their mothers, from whom they learn to know the plants and animals, and their value as food, how to collect veldkos, and how to use the different implements and utensils. The bigger boys follow the men out hunting. Towards his eighth or ninth year each boy is provided by his father with a proper bow and arrows, which are, however, not poisoned. With these he is allowed to shoot hares, guinea fowl and other birds, wild cats, small buck, etc. After killing his first steenbok or duiker he is given a few poisoned arrows, and later, when he has become proficient in the use of these, he is taught to stalk and shoot big game. By the time he reaches the age of puberty he has, as a rule, gained a very good knowledge of veldcraft. 868

In this way the children grow up in intimate contact with Nature, and acquire all the knowledge necessary for hunting and collecting. In the evening they run about near the huts, play various games, mostly denoting scenes of animal life, take part in the dances, or sit by the fire, listening to the talk of their elders, until they feel 857

[1] D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 18 sqq., 31–3; Passarge, op. cit., 100; Dornan, *Pygmies and Bushmen*, 333–4; Fourie, "Bushmen of S.W. Africa," 89–90.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date)1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

857 sleepy, and crawl on to the grass in the hut. No one sends them to bed.

593 So the children, during infancy and childhood, remain under the tutelage and in the care of their parents. Once they are grown up, no one really controls them. The tie between parents and mature children is simply one of respect and love, but there is no lack of family affection. Grandparents, uncles, aunts, and other relatives 603 are also respected to some extent, according to character. Among the Naron, grandparents, especially on the mother's side, take a [597] great interest in their grandchildren, and often adopt one which has been weaned, while among the Heikum orphans are generally adopted by the maternal grandparents. The grandmother is often [868] the person who teaches a child to speak. Between two sisters there 593 is usually a close bond of affection, they are generally companions, and help each other with their babies. In certain Cape Bushman tales the wife's unmarried sister is shown staying with her, as helper and nurse of the baby. On the other hand, among some of the North-Western tribes at least, there is a prohibition against a grown-up brother and sister speaking or sitting together. Here too, as in the case of the mother-in-law, the sitting and not the speaking appears to be the important part, for Miss Bleek records having heard an adult brother and sister address each other, while passing at a good distance.[1]

Girls' Puberty Ceremonies

881 The attainment of puberty is marked among all the Bushmen by the performance of certain ceremonies, through which the young people have to pass before being admitted to full membership of the group. Puberty ceremonies for girls are definitely found in all the [184] Bushman tribes, but corresponding ceremonies for boys appear to be restricted to the northern tribes. These ceremonies vary somewhat from tribe to tribe.

Among the Cape Bushmen a girl at the time of her first menstruation was in a state of taboo. "She is put into a tiny hut, made by her mother, with a very small aperture for the door, which her mother closes upon her. When she goes out, she looks down upon the ground; and when she returns to the hut, she sits and looks down. She does not go far, or walk about at this time. When presently she becomes a 'big girl', she is allowed to look about, and to look afar

[1] D. F. Bleek, "Bushman Terms of Relationship," 59, 66–7; cf. *idem*, *Naron*, 32; Fourie, "Bushmen of S.W. Africa," 94.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

also the doctors of the community. The millipede, said to belong to *Hishe*, is only touched by them; they dry it and use it powdered as medicine.

Naron magicians (*tsho k'auba* or */nu k'auba*) do not dress or live differently from the rest of the community. "No one would know them apart," says Miss Bleek, "nor do they seem to have much influence to-day." The Auen seem to have many more magicians than the Naron, by whom they are looked up to in magic matters. Here, according to Kaufmann, the magicians, (*tsho k'au*, */nu k'au* or */geixa*) have their skulls shaved clean, and also carry a few ornaments which may not be worn by other people. The magic art in both tribes is learned by apprenticeship. During the month of the puberty ceremony one or two boys are taught their trade by the old magicians. At the next ceremony they return and are taught more; and boys who have been with a magician for many years can when they become older succeed their master.[1]

Magicians among the Kung are of two kinds, and both are called in especially for illness. The */u k'au*, who sucks out the disease from the body of the patient, is "an evil person, who speaks to no one and always looks black"; while the */ue k'au*, according to Vedder, is the ordinary worker in magic and the poison-mixer, and also prepares medicines from herbs and roots by cooking.[2] Lebzelter gives further information about the magicians. Both men and women can be summoned by the "great captain" to exercise this calling. The power they receive from him is greater than that of all the spirits with the exception of */nawa*, and is equal to that of the latter. Magicians are thus "born and not made", to use Lebzelter's expression, but nevertheless it appears that they have to learn the secrets of their calling by apprenticeship. They accompany the old magicians at least once in the search for medicine plants, and are then subjected to a test. The old magicians in the customary manner attempt to cure a sick person by sucking out the "disease poison" ("Krankheitsgift") or the "spirits of disease" from the body of the patient; then they administer all the "disease poison" extracted by them to the initiates. If the latter do not die from this treatment, they have satisfactorily passed the test!

The magicians, apart from being able to cure illnesses by banishing the "spirits of disease" from the body of the patient, also have the

[1] D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 28; Kaufmann, "Die Auin," 159.
[2] "Grammatik der !kû-Buschmannsprache," 8-9.